

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 102009  
ORIGIN NODS-00

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DRAFTED BY S/S:PSHANKLE:BABS

APPROVED BY S/S:PSHANKLE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 102009

NODIS

WHITE HOUSE - FOR DR. BRZEZINSKI

FOL RPT ISLAMABAD 4530 ACTION SECSTATE 4 MAY 77 QUOTE

S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 4530

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, US

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER'S LETTER TO THE SECRETARY

REF: STATE 100260

1. AS OUR REPORTS SPELL OUT, THE GOP'S SUSTAINED CAMPAIGN  
ACCUSING THE US OF A CONSPIRACY AGAINST BHUTTO IS CONTINUING  
WITHOUT LETUP, AND WE ARE CONVINCED IT WILL CONTINUE. IT  
IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT WE HAVE ASSESSED PM BHUTTO'S LETTER  
TO THE SECRETARY. WE BELIEVE IT IS A CLEVER MOVE IN AN  
EFFORT ON HIS PART TO KEEP US OFF BALANCE AND UNCERTAIN  
ABOUT HIS EVENTUAL INTENTIONS IN MOUNTING THIS CAMPAIGN  
AGAINST US. IT GIVES FURTHER SUBSTANCE TO OUR BELIEF THAT  
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HIS OFFENSIVE IS BEING ORCHESTRATED PRIMARILY FOR DOMESTIC  
REASONS AND THAT HE WOULD LIKE, IF POSSIBLE, TO AVOID  
IRREPARABLE DAMAGE TO LONG-TERM US/PAK RELATIONS. HE IS  
IN EFFECT TELLING US THAT FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST HE IS  
NOT GOING TO ALLOW THIS CAMPAIGN TO GET COMPLETELY OUT OF  
HAND (THE DEFINITION TO BE HIS), THOUGH AT THE SAME TIME  
HE IS NOT PREPARED TO TURN IT OFF. HE HAS SERVED NOTICE

THAT HE IS KEEPING HIS OPTIONS OPEN. IN DOING THIS, AND  
IN USING NOTABLY WARM LANGUAGE IN HIS FINAL PARA (ALONG

WITH A REFERENCE TO "MOUNTING SOVIET PRESSURE" EARLIER  
IN THE LETTER), HE IS SEEKING TO WARD OFF ANY HARSH ACTION  
ON OUR PART. IN SHORT, THE LETTER IS DESIGNED TO ENSURE  
THAT IT IS BHUTTO WHO WILL CONTINUE TO CALL THE TUNE. WE  
ARE SUPPOSED TO REACT, HE WOULD EXPECT IN A CONCILIATORY  
WAY, TO HIS LEAD.

2. WE NEED A STRATEGY TO BREAK THROUGH THIS BHUTTO APPROACH,  
AND TO GAIN THE INITIATIVE. WE BELIEVE THAT OUR REPLY TO  
BHUTTO'S LETTER SHOULD BE A KEY PART OF THIS STRATEGY.

3. THE STRATEGY WE RECOMMEND WOULD COMPRISE THE FOLLOWING  
ELEMENTS.

4. IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, WE SHOULD ISSUE A PUBLIC ANNOUNCE-  
MENT OF THE STANDDOWN APPROACH RECOMMENDED IN ISLAMABAD 4398.  
IN MAKING THIS ANNOUNCEMENT, WE SHOULD ALSO STATE THAT THE  
SECRETARY HAD RECEIVED A REPLY FROM THE PM WHICH WE  
REGARDED AS PROVIDING AN OPENING FOR A DIALOGUE ON OUR  
MUTUAL PROBLEMS, AND THAT IN LIGHT OF THIS WE ARE HOPEFUL  
THAT THE STANDDOWN WOULD BE OF SHORT DURATION. THE  
ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD FURTHER STATE THAT THE SECRETARY HAD  
PROPOSED TO THE PM THAT AN APPROPRIATE FORUM FOR THE PRIVATE  
DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEM WHICH BHUTTO HAS TOLD US HE  
WOULD WELCOME WOULD BE HIS MEETING WITH PAK FOREIGN MINISTER  
AZIZ AHMED AT THE CENTO MINISTERIAL MAY 13-14.

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5. WE WOULD RECOMMEND STRONGLY AGAINST HOLDING TALKS WITH  
AHMED IN THE ABSENCE OF A PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED STANDDOWN.  
A FURTHER DELAY IN OUR TAKING ANY COUNTERACTION WOULD ONLY  
FURTHER PERSUADE THE PAKS THAT THEY COULD CONTINUE  
THEIR CAMPAIGN AGAINST US WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE TO  
THEIR OWN INTERESTS.

6. IN HIS PRIVATE WRITTEN REPLY TO THE PM, WHICH SHOULD  
BE TIMED TO REACH BHUTTO AS THE ANNOUNCEMENT IS BEING MADE  
IN WASHINGTON, THE SECRETARY SHOULD STATE THAT IN LIGHT OF  
THE CONTINUING CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE US BEING MOUNTED BY  
THE GOP AND ITS POLITICAL SUPPORTERS, THE USG HAS HAD NO  
CHOICE BUT TO ADOPT THE STANDDOWN POLICY ON AN INTERIM  
BASIS. WE WOULD HOPE THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO RESUME  
OUR OLD RELATIONSHIP SOON. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE ARE  
ENCOURAGED BY BHUTTO'S WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS OUR CONCERNS  
PRIVATELY AS THE SECRETARY HAD SUGGESTED. FORTUNATELY,  
THE UPCOMING MEETING OF CENTO AFFORDS AN EARLY AND

APPROPRIATE FORUM FOR THIS. HE LOOKS FORWARD TO MEETING WITH AZIZ AHMED AT THAT TIME TO REVIEW THE SITUATION. TO MAKE THE DISCUSSION A USEFUL ONE, IT IS IMPORTANT IN OUR VIEW THAT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS REVIEW BEFOREHAND WITH THE EMBASSY IN ISLAMABAD THE EVIDENCE OF ALLEGED INTERFERENCE WHICH WE HAVE ALREADY REQUESTED. WE REMAIN CONFIDENT THAT A REVIEW OF THIS EVIDENCE WILL DEMONSTRATE THAT THE CHARGES AGAINST US ARE UNFOUNDED.

7. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT AND THE LETTER BE ISSUED PROMPTLY. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE (ISLAMABAD 4376), AZIZ AHMED HAS TOLD THE BRITS HERE THAT HE MAY DECIDE NOT GO TO THE CENTO MEETING. WE SHOULD TRY TO ACT BEFORE THE PAKS FORECLOSE THIS USEFUL OPTION.

8. SHOULD THE PAKS REPLY THAT AZIZ AHMED WILL NOT BE GOING TO TEHRAN, OR INDICATE THAT THEY HAVE PROBLEMS WITH THAT  
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SETTING FOR OUR DISCUSSIONS, AN ACCEPTABLE FALL BACK FOR A MEETING WOULD BE THE CIEC SESSION IN PARIS LATER IN THE MONTH.

9. IN REFTTEL, DEPARTMENT ASKED ABOUT BHUTTO'S STATEMENT THAT HE HAD BROACHED SUBJECT OF US INTERFERENCE THREE TIMES WITH AMBASSADOR BYROADE. ASIDE FROM DISCUSSION AT FAREWELL DINNER, ONLY OTHER OCCASION WE CAN IDENTIFY WAS IN COURSE OF BHUTTO-BYROADE MARCH 18 CONVERSATION ON INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION WHICH ACCOMPANIED AMBASSADOR'S DEMARCHE ON NUCLEAR MATTERS. THIS CONVERSATION IS RECORDED IN ISLAMABAD 2682 AND RELATED TO BHUTTO'S OBVIOUS CONCERN IN THE DELAY OF A PRESIDENTIAL CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE.

10. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO REPEAT THIS MESSAGE TO AMBASSADOR BYROADE AT CINCPAC.  
CONSTABLE

UNQUOTE VANCE

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

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